

**(Washington D.C.)** - Today Congressman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (D-VA-03) introduced legislation that would dramatically improve high school graduation rates across the nation.

"The current high school accountability system is failing our students and our future as a nation," said Rep. Scott. "Almost one-third of all high school students in the United States fail to graduate with their peers – about 1.2 million every year – and the numbers are worse for minorities as compared to non-minority students," Scott reported. "I am introducing the Every Student Counts Act to bring meaningful accountability to high schools and help reduce the high school dropout rate."

Rep. Rubén Hinojosa, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness and an original cosponsor of the bill, commented: "I applaud Rep. Scott for all the work he has done to combat our nation's alarmingly low high school graduation rates. In our accountability system, the standard must be that every student graduates, prepared for a postsecondary education and a career – otherwise, we, as a country, have failed. The Every Student Counts Act will ensure that we are well on our way toward achieving that goal."

The Every Student Counts Act (H.R. 2955) builds on the National Governors Association's Graduation Rate Compact, which was signed by all 50 of the nation's governors in 2005. The legislation would ensure that schools are held accountable for graduating students by creating a single, accurate, and consistent measurement for reporting and accountability of high school graduation rates. It would require high schools to increase their graduation rates by meeting annual, research-based benchmarks with the long-term goal of reaching a 90 percent graduation rate. The bill would also require the disaggregation of graduation data by subgroup to ensure that schools are held accountable for increasing the graduation rate for all types of students. Finally, the bill would give schools credit for graduating students who need extra time by allowing students who graduate in five years to count toward a school's successful graduation rate.

"It is my hope that with this bill, we can make great strides toward graduating more of America's students and preparing them to succeed in college and in life. We need to ensure that all students are not only provided the opportunity to graduate with a high school degree, but are encouraged to do so," concluded Rep. Scott.

Original cosponsors also include Reps. Danny K. Davis, Bennie G. Thompson, Corinne Brown, Elijah E. Cummings, Chaka Fattah, William L. Jefferson, Raul M. Grijalva, Linda T. Sanchez, Barbara Lee, Julia Carson, Al Green, Loretta Sanchez, Edolphus Towns, Keith Ellison, Phil Hare, and Carolyn C. Kilpatrick.

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